Securing Our Future:
Making colleges and universities safe places to learn and grow

Report on Findings and Recommendations
August 21, 2007

Submitted to
Governor Matt Blunt

Missouri
Campus Security Task Force

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Visit the Campus Security Task Force website:
http://www.dps.mo.gov/CampusSafety/index.htm

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Campus Security Task Force
STATE OF MISSOURI

While college and university campuses are relatively safe, in the wake of a crisis pointed questions are raised. Why here? Why now? What should leaders have done to prevent and prepare for the tragedy? But after a period of time the questions subside, routines resume, and inertia overcomes the needed action to improve campus preparedness.

Administrators, in collaboration with the public safety community, must ensure that campus safety remains a priority in the calm between incidents. Threats to the safety of campuses are always present. From natural disasters to acts of violence, risks can be reduced through coordinated planning and preparation of faculty, staff, and students, but never eliminated completely. While large-scale disasters capture our attention, we must also be conscious of the alcohol- and drug-fueled violence that plagues colleges and universities.

Recognizing that the privilege to move freely and unfettered about campus is treasured, this report identifies recommendations for improving campus safety without abandoning that open academic culture.

As Co-Chairs of Governor Matt Blunt's Task Force on Campus Security, we had the honor of working with a cross-section of dedicated professionals representing law enforcement, fire safety, health and mental health, campus public safety, faculty, law, business, students, administrators, and homeland security. In the aftermath of the Virginia Tech tragedy we made a commitment to identify best practices and make recommendations for ways to ensure that college campuses throughout our state will be as safe as possible. Through collection of data, vibrant debate, and careful deliberation, the task force has successfully met its goal. We are pleased to present this report, *Securing Our Future: Making Colleges and Universities Safe Places to Learn and Grow*, to Governor Matt Blunt for his consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert B. Stein, Ph.D.
Commissioner
Department of Higher Education
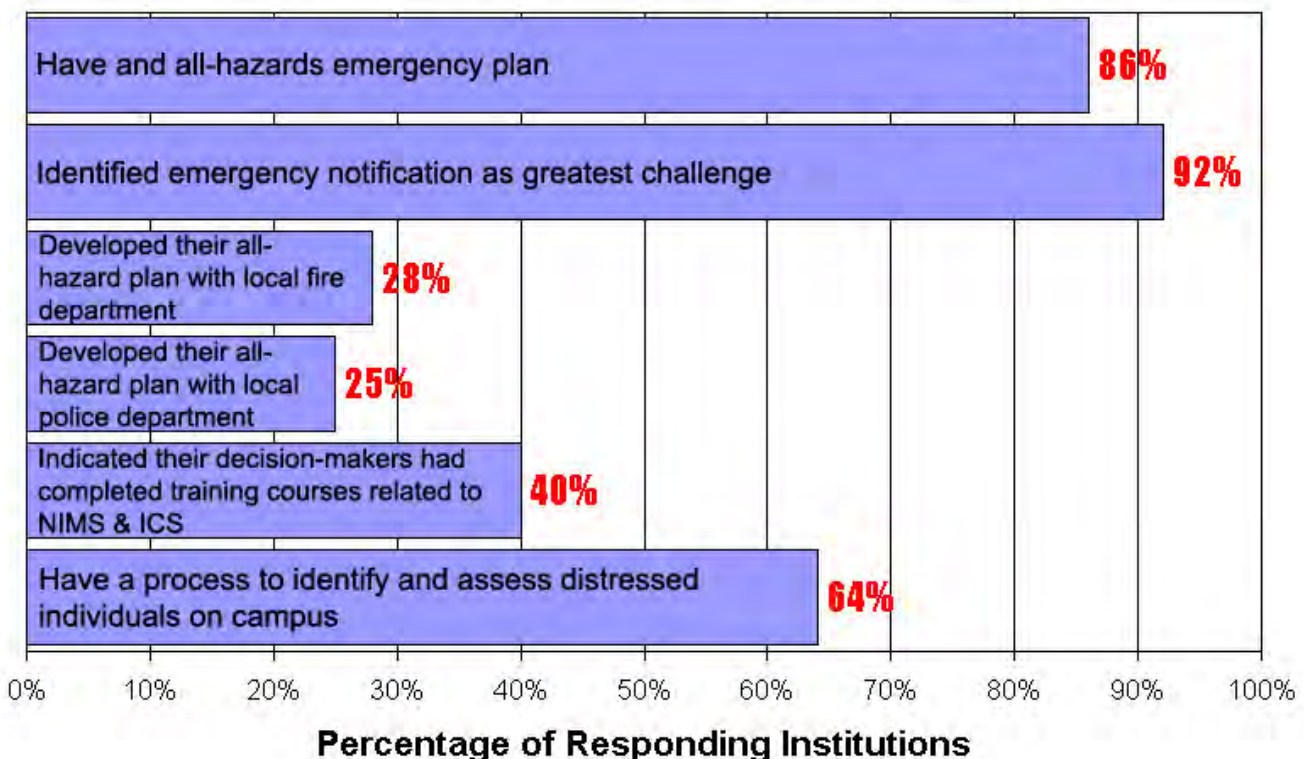
Mark S. James
Director
Department of Public Safety

The process adopted by the task force was designed to draw upon the knowledge and experience of its members as well as that of concerned individuals throughout the state and beyond. In all, five meetings were held.

During meetings, task force members discussed the issues, obstacles, and resources associated with college campus emergency preparedness and response. In preparation for developing a broad-based report, a survey was distributed to colleges and universities in Missouri. Thirty-six institutions responded. The findings revealed that:

- 86% have developed an all-hazard emergency plan.
- 92% identified emergency notification as the greatest challenge they face
- Disturbingly, only 28% coordinated development of their all-hazard emergency plans with local police; only 25% included their local fire departments.
- Fewer than 40% indicated that their decision-makers had completed training courses related to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) or the Incident Command System (ICS).
- Approximately 2/3 currently have a process to identify and assess distressed individuals on campus.

Responses to Campus Security Survey

Have and all-hazards emergency plan	86%
Identified emergency notification as greatest challenge	92%
Developed their all-hazard plan with local fire department	28%
Developed their all-hazard plan with local police department	25%
Indicated their decision-makers had completed training courses related to NIMS & ICS	40%
Have a process to identify and assess distressed individuals on campus	64%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Percentage of Responding Institutions

The Task Force was organized into three working subgroups to carry out its substantive work:
- Communication and Rapid Response
- Planning and Prevention
- Risk Mitigation and Recovery

Each working group was tasked with drafting a report[1] to summarize, among other matters, the primary issues presented by its particular areas of focus. The working groups' findings form the basis of this report.

"The Task Force will be charged with enhancing our ongoing efforts to make every school campus in Missouri a safe learning environment." - Governor Matt Blunt

Public hearings convened in St. Louis and Independence provided a wealth of information. Through their testimony, students, educators, counselors, public safety professionals and other concerned members of the community helped shape and focus the task force's inquiry and analysis. The public at large was also invited to submit written materials to the task force in lieu of public testimony. In all, 24 community members shared their insight and perspective with the task force, either through testimony or written submission.

At its May 24th meeting, the task force was briefed by Virginia State Police and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives representatives who were involved in the response to the Virginia Tech tragedy and subsequent investigation. The speakers offered invaluable insight regarding the incident, what preceded it, the law enforcement response, and its aftermath. It is an understatement, to say the least, that there are many important lessons to be learned from this horrific event.

The Campus Security Task Force operated on a consensus-driven model. Differences of opinion or controversy were not dealt with by direct up-or-down vote, but rather by discussion. Any member with a dissenting opinion was invited to submit a formal dissent for inclusion with this report.

Missouri Campus Security Task Force 2007

April	May	June	July	August
	May 3 1st Meeting	June 7 3rd Meeting Public Testimony	July 12 5th Meeting	
April 17 Creation of Task Force	May 24 2nd Meeting	June 11 4th Meeting Public Testimony		Aug 21 Report to Governor

[1] Subcommittee reports available on Campus Security Task Force website. See **http://www.dps.mo.gov/CampusSafety/index.htm** for more information.

During meetings of the task force, it became clear that an unspoken set of principles were guiding the discussions. While these principles may seem elementary, they form the basis for how the group chose recommendations for inclusion in the report.

1. While campuses are relatively safe, coordinated planning ensures preparation for all future crises.

The incidences of violent crime on our campuses are relatively low. We must, however, not be lulled into complacency or inaction by a "we have had no problems here" attitude. Prevention through planning is essential and achievable to reduce future risk and tragedy.

2. A one size fits all approach will not work.

Missouri's college and university campuses are as diverse as the students who populate them. Our higher education system comprises many types of institutions, from land-grant universities with hundreds of campus buildings, to small technical schools housed under a single roof.

Clearly, a research institution housing a nuclear reactor has vastly different security needs as compared to a small liberal arts school in rural Missouri. Broad-based general security-related recommendations will, necessarily, vary in their degree of relevance or applicability when applied to specific campuses.

3. There is no quick fix.

While we can never eliminate the threats posed to our campuses by crime or disaster, natural or person-caused, we can and must mitigate impact through effective all-hazard emergency preparedness. A layered approach to campus safety and security helps to ensure comprehensive, fail-safe systems and procedures, which, among other considerations, account for the inherent likelihood of human and technological error.

"Higher education applauds Governor Blunt for making safety on our campuses a priority of his administration. By appointing persons with experience in several professions, our Task Force will be well positioned to design a statewide approach adaptive to all locations that will ensure rapid response to any future threats."
- Dr. Robert Stein

Dr. Robert Stein (Left) and Governor Matt Blunt (Right) at the Campus Security Task Force press announcement in Jefferson City
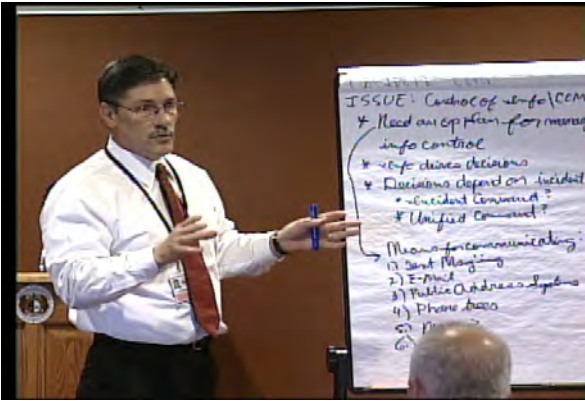
Public Safety Director Mark James gathers group input during the task force's third meeting, in Jefferson City.

"Our vision for the task force is to simply evaluate every aspect of campus safety to ensure a safe environment. We hope to develop new safety measures to complement the security efforts that have been underway on Missouri campuses over the past several years."
- Director Mark James

4. Financial resources, while necessary, are limited.

Money is limited and budgets are tight. By carefully considering the financial implications of safety and security enhancement plans, as well as the funding sources to support them, colleges and universities can maximize limited resources. Many of the "state of the art" available campus security tools are costly. Cost, however, is not necessarily a reliable measure of efficacy. Some procedures cost little or nothing to implement; others will, undoubtedly, be costly. Meaningful cost-benefit analysis is essential.

5. The entire campus and surrounding community has a role to play.

Each member of the campus community must take an active role in the process of making college campuses as safe as is reasonably possible. Community-based organizations within the geographic area of the campus should also be included. Regardless of location, out-of-the-ordinary behavior should be timely communicated to the appropriate authorities. Risks may be further reduced if the individuals to whom such information is reported have a clear understanding regarding what is to be done next as it relates to further reporting and intervention.

Each member of the campus community must take an active role in the process of making college campuses as safe as possible.

6. Plans must balance security against function and privacy.

Necessarily, the stricter the controls on personal freedom, the greater the possibility of creating a risk-free campus environment. We should make meaningful attempts to minimize risks while maintaining, to the greatest extent possible, the openness of our campuses. An appropriate degree of personal inconvenience must be tolerated by our campus community if heightened protection is to be achieved.

THEMES & RECOMMENDATIONS

This report is intended to capture the most essential issues and related recommendations that developed through the Task Force's proceedings. Categorized into six themes, the recommendations identify the best practices for resolving major challenges and deficiencies that were identified by the Campus Security Task Force.

Dedicated Leadership

The development and implementation of planning and prevention methods is a shared responsibility within the entire campus community, requiring each postsecondary institution, as well as the State, to provide strong leadership on these issues. Presidents, chancellors and other campus leaders must become actively engaged in evaluating their preparation for critical incidents. Likewise, State leaders should partner with postsecondary institutions to provide assistance for their preparation.

Tools and resources are in place to help educate college and university senior executives regarding emergency planning and response. The Missouri Office of Homeland Security has made a comprehensive web-based tool, the Emergency Response Information Program (ERIP)[2] available to postsecondary institutions. The Federal Emergency Management Agency also offers courses in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS)[3]. Unfortunately, these resources often go untapped by senior executives who will be required to serve as incident commanders in a crisis.

Recommendations:

- Each campus should designate an individual to coordinate emergency and homeland security operations. This individual should serve as the campus point of contact with the Missouri Office of Homeland Security and the local first-responder community and should have access to alerts through the statewide notification network. This individual should report to the institution's chief executive officer and have access to the executive staff.
- The coordinator mentioned above should also be responsible for ensuring that each institution's senior staff is trained in and familiar with NIMS and ICS.

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[2] See http://www.dps.mo.gov/HomelandSecurity/ERIPMaterial.pdf for more information
[3] See http://training.fema.gov for more information

- The chief executive officer of each institution should ensure that an all-hazard emergency response plan is in place. The plan should be developed by an interdisciplinary team in concert with local emergency responders, and should be reviewed and rehearsed regularly. Coordinating agencies should establish mutual-aid agreements incorporating a unified command structure in accordance with NIMS/ICS. Roles and expectations should be clearly defined in advance.

State-of-the-Art Resources

Recent events continue to demonstrate how technology can effectively help reduce crime, provide communication with potential victims when crime is occurring, and facilitate authorities' ability to investigate crimes after they occur. Without proper planning, preparedness, and coordination, however, even the most state of the art technology won't achieve maximum effectiveness in enhancing campus safety.

Technological solutions should be developed considering the worst case scenario.

Technological solutions should be developed considering the worst case scenario. All resources should be supported by back-up systems to ensure continued operation through unexpected circumstances such as power outages or intentional damage to equipment.

Recommendations:

- Colleges and universities should utilize failsafe systems to notify the entire campus community in the event of a crisis. Systems should use the best available technology to reach all stakeholders quickly (e.g. media alerts, public address systems, text messaging, e-mail, or sirens).
- Where practicable, colleges and universities should implement physical access control mechanisms (ranging from interior locks on classroom doors to controlled-access locks on dormitories) and policies for non-public buildings and after-hours access to public buildings.
- Surveillance cameras should be installed in areas where they will provide optimal effectiveness.
- Design of new and remodeled buildings should incorporate the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)[4].
- High-traffic areas of campus, indoor and outdoor, should be well lit and be within reasonable proximity of an emergency phone.
- Each institution should thoroughly evaluate the viability and appropriateness of using assessment tools (e.g. MOSAIC)[5] designed to identify individuals with the potential for violent behavior.
- The Emergency Response Information Program (ERIP) web-based tool, offered by the Office of Homeland Security, should be used in developing emergency response plans and providing tactical response information to community first responders. Emergency plans should include policies and procedures for utilization of state-of-the-art resources.

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[4] See http://www.thecptedpage.wsu.edu/ for more information
[5] See http://www.mosaicsystem.com/ for more information

Preparedness Culture

Educating the campus community about safety and security can be a daunting task, but campus leaders must make it a priority. The challenge is amplified since campuses experience significant turnover each year as students and employees come and go. Colleges and universities are heavily populated by persons who, in many cases, view themselves as somewhat invulnerable to crime and other risks. Campuses are viewed as relatively safe places, causing occupants to feel as though they are in a "bubble" where they are immune from bad things happening. Students, despite their new-found independence, often operate under the erroneous assumption that someone else is looking out for them. Part of the challenge becomes involving all members of the community in sharing responsibility for their own and overall campus safety and security.

All too often, our campuses are decentralized operations where decisions about the time or resources dedicated to safety and security education are left to compete with other academic or orientation issues. The task force learned that some campuses afford as little as only a few minutes of time to these important topics during a general orientation while others provide a full semester of programs. Clearly, given the diverse nature of our campuses, there is no one-size-fits-all answer. An organized safety and security education program unique to the special needs of each campus is of key importance.

A communication void between campus police/security, judicial affairs, residence life departments and counselors is dangerous and unnecessary.

While there is a general consensus that information sharing is important, concern and confusion abound regarding obstacles and potential liability presented by the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), among others. This uncertainty within the higher education community necessarily inhibits the flow of essential information.

A recent federal report on campus security[6] reported the existence of "information silos" among the higher education community. It is common for numerous groups to hold valuable intelligence about troubled students, but refuse to share it out of fear based on common misinformation about privacy laws. A communication void between campus police/security, judicial affairs, residence life departments and counselors is dangerous and unnecessary.

Finally, colleges and universities must challenge the prevailing social norms of college students that frown upon seeking help. Too often, students are discouraged from accessing mental health services by the fear of stigmatization. What's more, mental health services are frequently only available during business hours. Unfortunately, emotional crises often happen at inconvenient times, when students and other members of the campus community lack access to high-quality mental health services.

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[6] See http://www.hhs.gov/vtreport.html for more information

Recommendations:

- All students, faculty, and staff should receive regular training on the campus emergency procedures from early recognition through response. New students should receive a detailed explanation during orientation.

- Course syllabi should include building-specific instructions for reacting during an emergency situation. Faculty members should discuss the plan on the first day of class every semester.

- Emergency plan information should be distributed in student and employee handbooks and on the institution's website.

- Students and other members of the campus community should have access to on-campus, licensed mental health services 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

- On-campus mental health providers should establish consultation and referral relationships with public and private facilities that accept civil commitments.

- Every campus should establish a multidisciplinary (academic, law enforcement, mental health) team who share and review information about members of the campus community who are perceived as exhibiting behavior that has caused concern.

- The multidisciplinary team should work collaboratively to develop intervention strategies for individuals who potentially pose a risk to themselves or others.

  ◊ Early intervention efforts should also include prevention programs to address alcohol and drug abuse and related violence.

  ◊ Prevention programs should ensure that consistent messages and interventions are delivered throughout the campus.

- In light of the reality of financial limitations, institutions of higher education should share useful safety and security programs freely. A lack of funding is not a valid justification to do nothing to enhance campus security.

Consistent Protocols

While colleges and universities should maintain their autonomy in choosing how to address safety and security risks, certain consistent protocols are essential for making campuses safer.

Since critical incident preparedness is as important as the actual response, college and university chief executive officers should require that planning and coordination between their institutions and responding public safety agencies is a top priority. Ultimately, the president or chancellor sets the tone and agenda for the entire campus and can ensure that an orientation toward campus safety and security is maintained.

Recommendations:

- All colleges and universities should use the Emergency Response Information Program (ERIP) web-based tool to construct their all-hazard plan. FY 2009 should be the pilot year for higher education participation, with institutions providing feedback to the higher education subgroup of the Homeland Security Advisory Council[7].
- Campus law enforcement agencies should seek and obtain accreditation through programs offered by the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA)[8], the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA)[9], or other recognized accreditation organizations.
- As a condition of transfer, students should be required to provide waivers allowing access to disciplinary records at previously attended institutions.

Responder Support

Today's college and university campuses are far more similar to small cities than they are to elementary or secondary schools. Many have full-time residential populations that function on a 24-hour clock, operate academic and business functions throughout the day, and host numerous public events that include visitors to their facilities. Understandably, members of the campus community have high expectations as to how security and police personnel should respond during a crisis. These high expectations, however, may not be realistic considering the widely varying levels of authority, training and equipment available to campus first responders.

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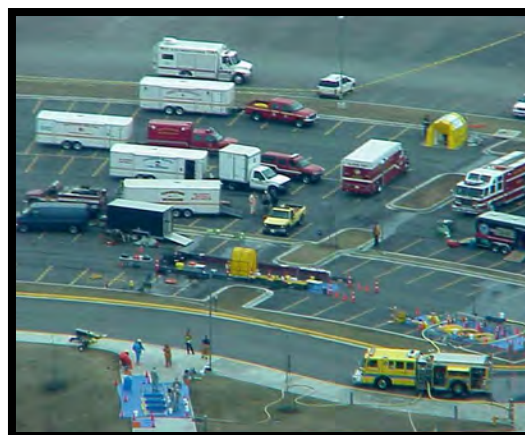
[7] See "Government Action" section of this report
[8] See http://www.iaclea.org for more information
[9] See http://www.calea.org for more information

Fully commissioned, POST-certified (Peace Officer Standards and Training)[10], armed police officers provide the best level of first response in any critical campus incident. Police officers have more extensive and comprehensive basic and ongoing training, direct access to law enforcement and intelligence records, and garner a higher level of respect and confidence from the community than their non-commissioned counterparts.

Recommendations:

- Colleges and universities should ensure that adequately armed, POST-certified police protection is available for its premises. Institutions not statutorily authorized to establish commissioned police departments should consider staffing arrangements with local law enforcement agencies[11].
- Campus and local police should receive specialized training in recognized and accepted law enforcement protocols with specific applicability to the campus environment including, but not limited to, active shooter response and crisis intervention teams.
- Emergency plans should include appropriate crisis-specific mental health responses, protocols and recovery functions including:
  ◊ Evidence-based mental health practices for responding to mental health needs of individuals directly or indirectly exposed to violence or trauma.
  ◊ Agreements involving mental health as a function of the emergency operations plan or available to incident command staff for decision making, planning, and support of responders.

Governmental Actions

While individual institutions are primarily responsible for the safety and security of their campuses, the State can also provide specialized assistance in this area, in that state agencies are often gatekeepers for access to important tools and organizations.

For example, the Emergency Response Information Program (ERIP), discussed previously in "Dedicated Leadership" and "Consistent Protocols," is a valuable resource that is available to postsecondary institutions. This web-based system is structured to make true, customized emergency planning available to all campuses, regardless of size or configuration.

Since Missouri's colleges and universities house some of the state's most valuable strategic assets, the government has a profound interest in maximizing their safety and security.

Moreover, existing groups, such as the Homeland Security Advisory Council, study a variety of security-related issues and could provide valuable insight to colleges and universities. Higher education is not currently represented in this group, which may leave colleges and universities uninformed of recent homeland security developments.

Since Missouri's colleges and universities house some of the state's most valuable strategic assets, the government has a profound interest in maximizing their safety and security.

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[10] See http://www.dps.mo.gov/POST/Main/ for more information
[11] These arrangements range from municipal police department substations on campus to campus police departments staffed with officers commissioned through local agencies.

Recommendations:

- A statewide official representing postsecondary education should be appointed to the Missouri Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC).

- A higher education subcommittee of Missouri's Homeland Security Advisory Council should be formed.

- The higher education subcommittee of the Homeland Security Advisory Council should design a method for a needs analysis and fiscal impact study of campus security enhancements to be completed by postsecondary institutions.

- The higher education subcommittee of the HSAC should, in consultation with institutions, establish the amount of new resources needed to support campus security enhancements.

- The higher education subcommittee of the HSAC should identify multiple funding sources, including state appropriations, institutional reallocations, gifts, bequests, and grants, to assist in defraying the costs associated with filling gaps in campus security.

- Consideration should be given to designing a competitive grants program for distribution of funds raised. Potential initiatives eligible for funding should include projects narrowly focused on campus security and include expected results.

- The Department of Public Safety should work with the higher education subcommittee of the Homeland Security Advisory Council to identify resources and training opportunities related to safety and security for college and university personnel.

- The Department of Higher Education and the Department of Public Safety should collaborate on the identification of skill sets necessary to prepare students for careers in emergency preparedness and response. Institutions should develop or modify degree programs to meet these identified needs.

- The higher education subcommittee of the HSAC should analyze the rationales for and against allowing private postsecondary institutions to establish police departments staffed by POST-certified police officers. Based on that analysis, the subcommittee should determine whether legislation authorizing private institutions to establish police departments is necessary and appropriate.

- The State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) should ensure that adequate involvement from mental health professionals is included in response and recovery efforts for all crises, including those affecting postsecondary institutions.

CONCLUSION

Ensuring that Missouri's colleges and universities remain safe environments is a task that cannot be taken lightly. Even when institutions take all the right steps, the possibility of crisis still looms. To effectively mitigate risks, campuses must consider preparedness to be a top priority that is continuously evaluated and improved. Stagnant plans that fail to respond to new threats will not be effective. As emphasized repeatedly in this document, each institution's chief executive officer is responsible for making emergency preparedness a highly visible priority. This point cannot be overemphasized.

While every recommendation in this report is essential, certain points have emerged as particularly striking. The establishment of multidisciplinary teams has gained the attention of many administrators. Ensuring that adequate police protection is available to campuses has struck a chord with law enforcement officers. Collaboration between campus and local emergency responders in the development and rehearsal of emergency plans has also gained attention. We find these three items to be foundation on which our other recommendations rely.

We, the Campus Security Task Force, hope that this report serves as a call to action for partnerships between campus officials and community first responders. A team approach is certainly the most effective way to implement the practices we have recommended. The days of silos of information and authority should end with the issuance of this report. Our bold optimism, we hope, will inspire this shift.